



GGS 102-001 - Physical Geography

Fall 2016 – Monday & Wednesday – 3:00 to 4:15

Classroom – Planetary Hall - 124

Instructor: Mike Wolf, Adjunct Professor

Email: mwolf7@masonlive.gmu.edu (best way to reach me)

Office: Exploratory Hall 2219

Office Hours: Monday 4:15 – 5:30 PM (right after class) or by appointment

Course Materials:

- Introducing Physical Geography, 6th Edition, by Alan Strahler
- Additional materials to be supplied

Course Description: This is an introductory course in physical geography. It is designed to provide you with an understanding of the natural features of the earth including earth-sun relations, weather, climate, soils, vegetation, geology and landforms. We will also discuss the tools geographers use such as maps, geographic information systems, and types of remote sensing.

Course Objectives:

By attending class lectures, reading the assigned book chapters, and independent study, students will be able to:

1. Learn the vocabulary and basic concepts involved in physical geography
2. Understand basic methods used in geography to study earth systems
3. Use basic geographic skills to analyze the physical phenomena of the earth

Grading Policy:

There will be 3 in-class exams and a final exam. At the end of the semester, I will drop the lowest exam grade and use 20% of that exam grade as extra credit for the course. For this reason, I will not give make up exams even with a valid excuse. If you miss the first exam (even with a valid excuse) you will receive an F as a midterm grade, even though it will still be possible for you to make an A as your final grade. Your grades will always be updated and visible in Blackboard.

You must take the final exam to pass the class. If you miss the final exam, you must notify me immediately and I will require documentation such as a letter from your physician in order to give you a make-up final. If you miss the final exam without a valid reason, you will receive an F as your grade. Final grades will be calculated as follows:

	<u>% of Final Grade</u>	<u>Points</u>
Exams I, II & III (drop the lowest)	60%	600
Final	30%	300
Attendance and Participation	10%	100
Total		1,000
<u>Extra Credit</u>		
20% of Lowest Exam Score		60

Final Grading Scale: A (90-100), B (80-89), C (70-79), D (60-69), F (Below 60)

Planned Schedule:

Date	Topic	Reading
29 August 2016	Introduction	Syllabus Review, Introduction
31 August 2016	Earth as a Rotating Planet	Chapter 1
7 September 2016	The Earth's Global Energy Balance	Chapter 2
12 September 2016	Air Temperature	Chapter 3
14 September 2016	Atmospheric Moisture and Precipitation	Chapter 4
19 September 2016	Atmospheric Moisture and Precipitation	Chapter 4, Exam Review
21 September 2016	Exam I	Exam I
26 September 2016	Winds and Global Circulation	Review Exam, Chapter 5
28 September 2016	Winds and Global Circulation	Chapter 5
3 October 2016	Weather Systems	Chapter 6
5 October 2016	Weather Systems	Chapter 6
11 October 2016 (Monday class held on Tuesday)	Global Climates and Climate Change	Chapter 7
12 October 2016	Global Climates and Climate Change	Chapter 7, Exam Review
17 October 2016	Exam II	Exam II
19 October 2016	Biogeography Processes	Review Exam, Chapter 8
24 October 2016	Biogeography Processes	Chapter 8
26 October 2016	Global Biogeography	Chapter 9
31 October 2016	Global Soils	Chapter 10
2 November 2016	Earth Materials and Plate Tectonics	Chapter 11
7 November 2016	Tectonic and Volcanic Landforms	Chapter 12
9 November 2016	Weathering and Mass Wasting	Chapter 13
14 November 2016	Exam III	Exam III
16 November 2016	Freshwater and the Continents	Review Exam, Chapter 14

21 November 2016	Freshwater and the Continents	Chapter 14
28 November 2016	Landforms Made by Running Water	Chapter 15
30 November 2016	Landform Made by Waves and Wind	Chapter 16
5 December 2016	Glacial and Periglacial Landforms	Chapter 17
7 December 2016	Last Class – Wrap up the course	Final Exam Review
12 December 2016	Final Exam	1:30 pm – 4:15 pm

GMU Email Accounts & Blackboard:

You must use and regularly check your GMU email account and Blackboard to receive information for this class. Please do not send emails to me from non-GMU accounts. If you send me an email at mwolf7@masonlive.gmu.edu I will normally respond within 24 hours.

Honor Code:

You are expected to follow the George Mason University rules of student conduct as noted in the catalog.

Office of Disability Services:

If you require academic accommodations due to a permanent or temporary disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at (703)993-2474, <http://ods.gmu.edu>. ODS will then contact me to arrange appropriate accommodations.

Classroom Expectations and other Miscellaneous:

Students are expected to be on time for class. Regular attendance is strongly recommended.

1. Should circumstances arise that make you late, do not disrupt the class as you enter, take the first available seat and do not walk across the room.
2. Clean up after yourself. If you pack it in, pack it out; leave your seat better than you found it. Remember, take only notes and leave only a warm seat.
3. In the event of any class cancellation, including inclement weather (e.g. snow), the class will resume where we left off, adjustments, if necessary, will be made later.
4. Please turn cell phone sounds off and do not text or talk during class.
5. No laptops or tablets or other electronic device are to be used by the student during the lecture for note taking or for recording the lecture. Lecture slides will be provided within 24 hours after the lecture. If you feel note taking is necessary, then research has shown that pen and paper is the most effective.